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Expert workshop on participation and social justice

Note by the Secretary-General

I. Background

1. In its resolution 1996/7, the Economic and Social Council decided on the substantive items of the agenda for the Commission for Social Development at its future sessions and on a multi-year programme of work of the Commission for the consideration of priority subjects. The Commission had discussed the eradication of poverty at its special session in 1996; and it considered productive employment and sustainable livelihoods at its thirty-fifth regular session in 1997. At its thirty-sixth session in 1998, the Commission will give attention to promoting the social integration and participation of all people, including disadvantaged and vulnerable groups and persons, with consideration of the following specific topics:

(a) Promoting social integration through responsive government, full participation in society, non-discrimination, tolerance, equality and social justice;

(b) Enhancing social protection, reducing vulnerability and enhancing employment opportunities for groups with specific needs;

(c) Violence, crime and the problem of illicit drugs and substance abuse as factors of social disintegration.

2. In its resolution 1995/60, the Economic and Social Council had decided that the Commission for Social Development should establish the practice of opening its debates to experts and the main actors of civil society so as to enhance the exchange of information and experience, knowledge and understanding of social development. Further, in its resolution 1996/7, the Council reaffirmed the need for ensuring an effective partnership and cooperation between Governments and the relevant actors of civil society, the social partners and the major groups as defined in Agenda 21,[1] including non-governmental organizations and the private sector, in the implementation of and follow-up to the Copenhagen Declaration and Programme of Action, and for ensuring their involvement in the planning, elaboration, implementation and evaluation of social policies at the national level.

3. Accordingly, in preparing for the thirty-sixth session of the Commission and in response to the expressed intentions of the Council, the United Nations Secretariat organized an expert workshop on participation and social justice, hosted by the Department for International Development of the Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, and held in London, from 29 September to 3 October 1997. The workshop brought together experts from all world regions and

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observers from the United Kingdom and from the United Nations system.

II. Objective of the Workshop

4. The Heads of State and Government at the World Summit for Social Development stated that the goal of integration should be "a society for all" in which all people have the right and the ability to participate in decisions affecting their lives. The purpose of the Workshop was to review experience in different areas to determine how participation might be encouraged so that social integration could be promoted.

5. To date, much has been written about participation in development projects and at the grass-roots level in communities. There has been little attempt to review how that participation relates to larger processes of social integration, equality and social justice. Therefore, the Workshop considered areas in society where participation might be encouraged and developed, as in legal, political, economic and administrative areas, in addition to more traditional areas such as provision of social services, development of non-governmental organizations and access to information.

6. It is expected that the Commission for Social Development will relate the question of participation – and indeed the overall issue of social integration – to efforts to eradicate poverty, to empower disadvantaged and vulnerable groups, and to respond to major and rapid changes in many areas of life, including the phenomenon of accelerating globalization, which are having a profound impact on societies everywhere.

7. The report of the Workshop is annexed to the present note.

Notes

[1] In addition to the social partners (representatives of trade unions and of business and industry), the major groups identified in Agenda 21 are women, children and youth, indigenous people, non-governmental organizations, local authorities, the scientific and technological community and farmers.

Annex

Report of the Expert Workshop on Participation and Social Justice

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I. Introduction

1. At the threshold of a new millennium, humankind remains confronted with unacceptable disparities in levels of economic and social development. At the global level, there is the phenomenon of the widening gap between those countries that have witnessed remarkable growth and those countries whose economies have stagnated. In many countries, the social costs of economic adjustment and transition have been high. Even in countries where economic growth has been maintained, large numbers of people have not partaken of its benefits. Disparities and inequalities are unacceptable as such, but they also constitute a primary source of conflict and threaten peaceful relations between and within countries. These conditions must lead to a fundamental rethinking of current approaches to development.

2. For too long the development debate has ignored the fact that poverty tends to be characterized not only by material insufficiency but also by denial of rights. What is needed is a rights-based approach to development. Ensuring essential political, economic and social entitlements and human dignity for all people provides the rationale for policy. These are not a luxury affordable only to the rich and powerful but an indispensable component of national development efforts.

A. The importance of participation

3. Development requires investment in social capital, for enhancing social relationships and networks, building consensus and generating individual, organizational and institutional capabilities. Participation is, in this context, a central element.

4. Participation has been defined in many different ways, with different theoretical, methodological and practical implications. What is certain is that consideration of these differences is crucial in order to clarify the ways in which different actors (organizations of civil society, the private sector, governments and international organizations) understand the concept. It is also necessary to identify the mechanisms which are used by these actors to enhance participation.

5. Participation may be defined as a process by which people take an active and influential role in shaping decisions that affect their lives. It is fundamentally social, in that it is primarily concerned with the ways and means by which people interact with one another, and seeks to enhance relationships within and across communities and with the natural environment. It can provide opportunities for people with different ethnic and cultural backgrounds and diverse experiences and needs to cooperate and resolve conflicts. It is about creating networks of solidarity.

6. Participation is also political. It focuses on the distribution of power in society, and its overriding concern is to assist the weak to empower themselves; as such, it is an expression of the democratic process. It underpins democracy by delimiting the powers of the executive, legislature and judiciary while guaranteeing freedom of the press, and justice, and strengthening and protecting people's rights.

7. Participation has important economic aspects: it is concerned with the relative distribution of resources — human, financial and social — available to a society; it is about productive employment and the ability to earn a sufficient income for good health and social cohesion.

8. It redefines administration by seeking to decentralize and deconcentrate responsibility and power to levels that facilitate direct involvement which can enable people to exercise greater control over their lives. It is concerned with the full involvement of all stakeholders on terms which they establish; it is a bottom-up process. It promotes accountability and transparency in the development cycle.

9. Participation can be understood as a means, as a goal, and as a process. It was traditionally used as a means to reduce costs and promote greater effectiveness and efficiency in project implementation and service delivery. From a more integrated perspective, participation is an essential means to empower communities to identify their priorities, and to ensure their control over actions and resources needed to achieve their goals.

10. As a goal, participation supposes building capacities in people so that the gains they make are sustained. The goal is for previously marginalized people to take a more active part in society and to lead more productive and fulfilling lives. It is important to take into account who is included when participatory processes are described, how these people are incorporated, and with what goals and purposes.

11. As a process, participation offers a new approach to the governance of societies. It makes possible a framework of interaction among the state, the market and civil society which emphasizes partnership and shared responsibility. The democratic process is strengthened as decision-making becomes more participatory and responsibilities are decentralized to empowered local communities.

12. Participation is not simply about access to government but about people being an important element in the process of governance. It is not just about contributing to project implementation; it is about conceptualizing, deciding, implementing and evaluating what is done. It is not just about people doing something together; it is about information-sharing, so people can motivate each other through solidarity. It is not top down, nor is it about one group of people making decisions for or about another group of people.

13. There has been a growth in the use of participatory methods for working with people at all levels to assist them in analysing their problems and to empower them to do something about those problems. There has been a re-evaluation of the question, "whose knowledge counts in policy-making?" The success of these approaches is captured in people's own accounts and testimonies to the ways their lives have been improved and their sense of empowerment has increased. The dynamism and power that is being released through the emergence of participatory processes is a positive and creative development. But participation continues to pose risks. The "end product" is not always "good". By its very nature it can challenge power structures and lead to conflicts within communities and with those in authority. It can also become an empty word unless it is linked to clear analytical frameworks and methods and appropriate actions.

14. It has been observed that participation is difficult to promote, or even to define. It should also be pointed out that attempts to enhance participation contain an inherent contradiction which arises from the attempt by "outsiders" to enhance people's participation in a political and social system (to provide them a role within democratic systems) by inserting them into the system. In other words, the inclusion of formerly marginalized groups requires a pro-active effort which is externally imposed, and is thus essentially non-participatory.

15. Affirmative action and the setting of quotas are examples of such attempts. These kinds of initiatives should be examined and implemented with a high degree of sophistication and cultural awareness if participation is to be truly enhanced. To be truly participatory, such initiatives must actively involve marginalized groups in decision-making about how they are implemented. Ultimately, participation must be the result of evolution and change within societies and systems which themselves become vehicles for increased participation.

16. Participation is sometimes taken to imply that there is authentic representation of diverse elements from within a society. But enhancing participation can require the construction of new cultural and social paradigms which do not come naturally to the groups in question (e.g., women in traditional societies) or are not readily acceptable to them.

B. Overcoming social cleavages

17. The traditional cleavages in industrial societies were along class lines, or were so interpreted. The working class and its organizations — labour unions and workers' political parties — emerged as new actors in the political arena and took part in the formulation and implementation of programmes with the aim of improving the situation of workers and their families. Social security systems were introduced, in the beginning for workers and employees, later, in some countries, for other segments of the population also. With the growth in production and productivity, these policies brought a "golden era" of well-being, often underpinned by the State.

18. Today, many divisions, conflicts and cleavages are still conditioned by social class. However, the concept of class is weakening as a result of many factors, including increasing occupational diversity and flexibility. At the same time, divisions along lines of gender, generation and ethnicity have received greater recognition and attention.

19. In the past two decades, awareness of gender discrimination has risen as a result of the action of women, both nationally and internationally. However, open or hidden gender discrimination continues: girls are treated differently from boys (e.g., nutrition and education); for women, the access to good jobs and higher positions in society is mostly more difficult than for men. On the other hand, women are (as mothers) still the primary care-givers for their children, because the majority of fathers are reluctant to take on that task. Lower salaries — and in old age, lower pensions — for women are obvious consequences of this situation. Nevertheless, the consolidation of the women's movement across political parties, countries and cultures and its participation in political decision-making, has questioned the most blatant patriarchal preconceptions and thus profoundly changed societies.

20. Divisions and cleavages in contemporary societies are also defined by ethnicity. Intolerance and xenophobia are evident in many places, directed even against native-born minorities, as well as against immigrants, migrant workers and refugees. Legislation concerning immigration is being made more restrictive in many countries. This can lead to an increase in illegal immigration, especially from countries with persistent serious economic and political problems.

21. Participation has been identified as an essential element for bridging social cleavages, but in this case some caution is necessary: while it is true that the participation of ethnic minorities is essential for their full integration into society, care is required, particularly at the local level. It may well be that at the local level antagonism between majority and minority is so strong that it prevents peaceful cooperation. In such cases central Governments must take responsibility for the protection of minorities.

22. For a long time generational cleavages were neglected. Older persons were among the first to form interest groups aiming to improve their material situation and their degree of recognition in society. Politicians have identified older persons as an increasingly important population group which — because of the ageing of societies — will be crucial at election time.

23. Children, on the other hand, have hardly been identified as a population group of interest for policy makers and are usually assumed to be covered through policies concerned with families. Children as individuals do not vote and are generally invisible to policy makers. Today, increasing numbers of children are at risk, in particular in many developing countries, and in areas of conflict and war, or because they are street children, or abused children. Growing levels of child poverty have been registered in a number of developed countries, as well; in some countries, the poverty risk is twice as high for children as for adults, and the generational gap is still widening.

24. This situation demands a rethinking of the position of children and young people in society, their direct and indirect participation in all spheres of life, and their inclusion as partners in negotiations over a new generation contract. It also demands the introduction of child-impact statements to ensure that legislation and social action do not discriminate against children.

II. The political process

A. National political processes

25. Harmonious and equitable social integration requires the existence of both a formal democratic political system and participatory institutions and mechanisms.

26. In some parts of the world, conditions are such that people, especially the poor and marginalized, have been successful in designing solidarity organizations that are effective in reducing the effect of poverty, and since structural adjustment, some have taken on new tasks in job creation, environmental control and preventive health programmes, among others.

27. In other parts of the world where conditions have not made the creation of such local-level organizations possible, efforts should be made to provide them. The initial conditions required seem to be experience or a tradition of organizing some minimal level of resources, income or subsistence to meet immediate needs and a supportive, or at least permissive, government.

28. Community organizations must not be thought to wear halos. They may be prone to conflict and competition with each other, especially when they are organized around a single issue. In that case, the people's know-how, values, culture and ethics may remain isolated or localized at a grass-roots level, centred on their immediate problems and solutions. Such local or immediate approaches and solutions may not contribute substantially to social integration and often lead to confrontation, or to a zero-sum logic, in which even within the same community, one organization's gain is considered to be another organization's loss.

29. A second important stage in participatory development occurs when social organizations go beyond an immediate response to basic human needs to designing and proposing sustainable and synergetic solutions in processes that contribute to integral development.

30. Governmental and non-governmental agents should try to enhance and empower community organizations so that they can become involved in development planning processes in which their particular needs or interests are made part of the search for a common good. The perspective of a common good opens up possibilities for more interaction among actors and new forms of consensus-building.

31. Social integration is hindered by the weaknesses in and, in some cases, breakdown of democratic systems.

(a) In many developing countries, the democratic systems are fragile for historical and cultural reasons. Often, their constitution and laws have been copied from those of other countries, without concern or respect for the local ethnic composition or culture;

(b) In many developed countries, representative democracies are suffering from diminishing participation, even in elections, and from the fact that parties and party systems are being questioned for their lack of representation and internal transparency. Also, increasingly, minority and ethnic groups feel that the democratic systems do not work in their interests;

(c) In recent decades — especially during the periods of structural adjustment — politics as the means by which a society decides what type of development it will have has been replaced by economics. That is to say, in many developing countries, the balance of power in negotiations has shifted from elected authorities to professionals and technocrats, especially the representatives of international financial and business institutions.

32. In order to consolidate and make democratic systems more participatory, it is essential to enhance grass-roots organizations, to further their integration with other organizations and to strengthen their ability to participate in more complex political scenarios and to work with other actors, such as businesses, political parties and governmental agents.

33. The notion of a democratic political setting is one where single-issue groups are able to go beyond their immediate needs, understand and respond to other's interests, handle conflicts, find ways to dovetail solutions and build a consensus around the common good. This is the essential meaning of politics.

34. Building this consensus depends, first, on strengthening the participatory nature of grass-roots organizations themselves. This includes promoting more transparent and democratic organizations and institutions and providing education and training in order to enable people to comprehend complex situations and do effective and viable planning. In the place of charismatic — sometimes authoritarian — leaders, what is required are leaders who promote dialogue, internal democracy and a broader understanding of problems.

35. Other stakeholders, such as non-governmental organizations, community workers, local administrators and politicians must relate to the community organizations in ways that increase their understanding and capabilities. They must not see themselves as just deliverers of technical solutions or see the community organizations as executors of predetermined programmes. Nor must technical and professional knowledge take precedence over local knowledge and expertise. Therefore, all actors must see themselves as part of the political process of consensus-building. Once these participatory democratic processes are working, it can be expected that electoral processes and systems will have more significance and there will be less feeling of alienation. To consolidate this inclusive politics, it is essential that electoral processes be transparent and free from coercion. To eliminate barriers to the participation of excluded communities, access to information, funding and the media is also essential.

36. There are numerous examples of community participation at the level of municipal government which enable people to understand the particular role of local government in policy-making and in the allocation of resources on a wider scale. Most experiences of community groups working with municipal government are limited to participation in social relief programmes normally not designed with and by the people. Such experiences are important, but of greater significance is the involvement of people in the whole policy process: design, resource allocation, implementation, and evaluation. Successful practices should be institutionalized and made sustainable through legislation. Furthermore, resources should be provided so that successful experiences can be shared among groups. Groups should also be ensured the right to decide for themselves the areas of their concern.

B. Levels of government

37. To achieve widespread and sustainable social integration requires moving beyond poverty relief measures to promoting participation in larger development processes and consolidated participatory democracies. Such a process involves all levels of politics. Much emphasis has been given to the national, or *macro*, level. Increasingly, international institutions such as supra-national parliaments, human rights organizations, and trade and finance agents have a growing influence at the national, macro level.

38. Others have put the focus of participation on the *micro* level, the very local level of organizations concerned with action on particular, immediate needs. All levels of government have an interest in establishing a decentralized form of government, and decentralization involves shifts of power from the top of tiers and hierarchies of governance to the bottom. "The people" should not be held responsible for making a system of government participatory on their own.

39. There is an emerging, third level of activity. Special attention should be given to this sub-national level, or *meso*, where new approaches to development and forms of participatory democracy are being developed. Defined as a physical setting or territory where conditions exist to promote and sustain development, not just poverty relief measures, the *meso* level must also have sufficient resources — human and social, economic and natural — to sustain development and some form of viable government, usually a municipal government. These conditions are emerging in subregions within countries, often in river basins which link rural areas with growing cities. Large or

megacity groupings of neighbourhoods or local districts are also producing similar dynamics.

40. At the *meso* level the community-based organizations — which are helping to meet immediate needs such as housing, urban services, or health — learn to interact with other community organizations and to ume mutual responsibility for finding solutions to their ems. In the process, new practices and institutions are being created. Actors are coming together in public spaces which are not necessarily of the state, but in which the state can participate. In the process, boundaries between politics, administration, civil society and the state are being reshaped. All these actors should be considered part of the political process and the exercise of power.

41. The success of decentralization, where real powers and resources are turned over to the *meso* and local levels, depends to a great extent on the consolidation of these new experiences of participatory democracy. If experiences at the subnational, or *meso*, level are not consolidated and if their capacities to meet those demands are not strengthened, decentralization may lead to irresponsible spending and consumption or to further empowering those who already have power locally, regionally or nationally, such as the elite or leaders of municipal governments.

42. Whereas there are examples of successful decentralization of resource allocation, service delivery, and conflict resolution from the centre to very small-scale, local levels, there are risks attached: local decision-making may become dominated by one person, party or ethnic group, which may then exclude other members of the community from access to services and resources. Decentralization needs to be accompanied by mechanisms to ensure that basic rights and principles of social justice and legal frameworks are respected. Therefore, transparency and monitoring mechanisms must be set up at all levels in order to guarantee a proper balance between responsibility and autonomy at the different levels of government.

43. Crucial to successful decentralization is a clear delineation of the functions, fiscal and other resources, and decision-making responsibilities of each tier of government.

C. Creating the space for civil society

44. A number of structures and mechanisms need to be constituted to enable civil society to make a full and growing contribution to the promotion of people's various goals and to the broader objective of a fully informed and involved citizenry.

45. At the village, or local, level, which is usually the first level where people can participate, village development committees should be encouraged. Members of such committees should be directly elected and. should have the power to design, plan and monitor committee activities. The committees should have the power to make direct appeals to local and central government and, through representatives, to economic, environmental and poverty eradication councils and to parliament.

46. Organizations at an intermediate level should provide a link between local community organizations and central government. They should have the power to deal with issues that affect the community beyond the village, or local, level. In one country in Africa, for example, the Public Affairs Committee consists of church leaders, members of the private sector, non-governmental organizations, grass-roots groupings, young people, disabled persons and other community-based associations.

47. National organizations should provide equal opportunities for citizens and legal residents to contribute to, participate in and execute the planning, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes. The goal should be to institutionalize the dialogue between people and their government. In some countries Presidential Councils have been established for this purpose, often composed of persons nominated from civil society, government, non-governmental organizations and the donor community and of experts from international organizations.

48. National organizations should be numerous and diverse, and they should be promoted to strengthen civil society in its essential role of involving citizens in the practice of decision-making. Such organizations should reflect the needs expressed by society; organizations should not be created for their own sake. It is also important for governments to create an enabling environment for non-governmental organizations. All members of society should have the right to create such structures. Assurance of this right should emanate from legislative instruments so that there is no interference from bureaucracies. Legislative instruments should also be put in place to restrain bureaucracies from directly interfering with the right of groups to express their needs. Wherever necessary, bureaucracies should work in collaboration with social groups to achieve desired goals.

49. Such organizations can be used by the people as channels of communication at the grass-roots level, the intermediate level, the national level and the international level. Representative non-governmental organizations and democratically elected governments should work in

partnership. The nature of the partnership should be one in which non-governmental organizations challenge governments to be responsive to the interests of all citizens.

50. Society should be guided by legislation that regulates conduct while reflecting the will of the people. People should have powers to initiate and monitor legal processes. Organizations should also be governed by an agreed code of conduct. For example, where a number of organizations belong to the same grouping, such as non-governmental organizations, they should be encouraged to develop a code of conduct that establishes a level playing field. This will enable them to carry out self-monitoring, a tool to ensure that standards are maintained and accepted practices are followed.

51. Non-governmental organizations play a catalytic role in development activities and are agents of change; they are also essential in enhancing governance and promoting the role of civil society. But the rapid expansion of the scope and complexity of their activities calls for increased coordination. A major weakness stems from the fact that, as organizations, they have paid limited attention to defining who they are and what they are. This has raised questions of their identity. They may become self-sustaining organisms, whose goal is to stay alive, regardless of their impact at the community level. In some cases their original social role and mission have been displaced by a need or desire to execute projects. It is therefore important that established and legitimate non-governmental organizations be encouraged in their work by insistence on greater transparency and accountability. In this regard, it is often important for non-governmental organizations to operate with a certain degree of "tension" which forces them to be accountable and serve community needs and encourages them to strive to be credible.

52. Governments should also include in their national budgets funding for enhancing the capacity of the organizations of civil society. Such funding should not adversely affect the autonomy of those organizations in their implicit role of complementing and supplementing governmental efforts to promote shared goals. Donor governments should be enabled to provide funds directly to communities after needs have been identified.

III. Participation in economic policy-making

53. In an integrated society, all citizens have the opportunity to participate at the relevant levels — local, national and global. All individuals have community, social and economic roles, and it is important not to ignore the economic role in achieving an integrated society.

54. No economic policy is distributionally neutral. Policies tend to be biased in favour of those with power and resources in society. As a consequence, they frequently have the effect of excluding significant sections of society (poor people, women, ethnic groups, young people, disabled people, older persons, and various marginalized groups). The result is to disempower the excluded significantly and reinforce their feelings of inability to influence policy.

55. The challenge lies in identifying mechanisms and opportunities that enable all people to participate in the process of designing economic policies.

56. There are various, multiple levels at which the economic decisions that affect people's lives are made. People can be economic actors and decision makers as consumers, producers and workers; members of families, households and communities; members of interest groups and organizations; part of the formal power/political structures; bureaucrats/public servants; part of national and global citizenry; and as taxpayers.

57. Assuming that the conditions for participation exist, people have the potential to influence economic policies and activities in all of those areas to a greater or lesser extent.

58 .Individuals in the marketplace can exercise influence by using consumer power, owning shares, organizing cooperatives and trade unions (labour associations), or organizing in other ways to influence policy. This requires access to information about the environmental, social, political and cultural effects of consumer choice and spending, and a supportive legislative framework.

59. Within households and families, power relations often determine intra-household budget allocations. For example, men may control the income from women's productive activities, and that may have a detrimental effect on household welfare and well-being. Methods need to be developed to assist people to work for more equal arrangements by such means as legal reform, literacy programmes, legal literacy, and conflict-resolution techniques. Increased opportunities for women to earn an income are also necessary.

60. Social, religious and cultural networks can help to represent the specific economic interests of all the different groups in the community, particularly excluded groups; ensure that policies reflect the needs and interests of communities; ensure that policies do not lead to the disintegration of communities; collect relevant data and

information on the impact of economic policies; carry out participatory monitoring of policies; and ensure local representation in governmental structures.

61. Single-interest groups can also have a strong impact on both local and national economies — for example, facilitating certain activities or protesting environmental, health and other concerns).

62. Participatory planning should be carried out at all levels of government, but local (including district and provincial) government may be particularly suitable for participatory methods. Local governmental structures can enhance interaction between people and government, monitor environmental and social compliance by business organizations, ensure processes of accountability and open flows of information, influence the distribution of fiscal resources, and influence local economic development activities.

63. People can ensure that they participate in public forums and insist on open and accountable procedures.

64. At the level of central government, there are a number of ways in which policy can be influenced — from outside, through think tanks, economic and social councils, alliances of academics, non-governmental organizations and pressure groups; people's budget networks, and alternative budget strategies (e.g., the development in some African countries of gender-sensitive budgets); from within, through parliaments and their committees, which can and do play an important role.

65. For countries undergoing structural adjustment or reform, various instruments have been used by the international financial institutions, including public expenditure reviews; country economic memoranda; policy framework papers; and economic sector work. There is now broad consensus that civil society needs to be involved in the public expenditure reviews; that there should be transparency in the research agenda of the economic sector; that participatory assessment methods should be used in all these activities; and that departments concerned with social questions, labour, health and other issues should participate with ministers of finance in negotiations with external donors on strategic policy issues.

66. Many economic policies are designed outside the countries concerned, often without adequate consultation. Capacity-building and training can help national authorities to increase their bargaining power in the process of dialogue concerning those policies.

67. Countries with emerging economies should be considered future partners and competitors rather than as long-term recipients of foreign aid. The development of capacities should be realized, and their growing "voice" in the planning and assessment of international programmes. Assistance programmes that are designed by donor countries alone are often more adjusted to the interests of the foreign experts and companies that participate in them than to the interests of the recipients. Instead, they should focus on creating opportunities for the innovative and self-sustainable activities of the people responsible for their own futures. Countries with emerging economies should be included as soon as possible in the network of international cooperation, with roles and responsibilities corresponding to those of developed countries. Decisions about resource allocations and programme effectiveness should be made by all the participating countries.

68. At the global level, individuals, through the national affiliates of major international non-governmental organizations, can play an advocacy role in shaping policy on such issues as debt or the levels of aid budgets. Such advocacy roles should be welcomed and facilitated by national authorities and international organizations.

69. Regional and subregional economic groupings should be encouraged in and assisted to build capacity to promote development, to bargain as a group for better terms in external transactions, and to involve civil society in their policy-making processes.

70. Decisions on how aid should be used and on what terms should be subject to agreement among all parties concerned, in donor and recipient countries.

71. In multilateral aid mechanisms, the views and concerns of the recipient countries, especially the poorer or weaker countries, should be fully taken into account and respected.

72. A high standard of ethical conduct in international trade should be encouraged on the part of all participants. The concept of social responsibility by private enterprise should be explored and promoted with the cooperation of the private sector, to encourage the replication of current best practices.

IV. Access to work, means of livelihood, income and social services

73. The historical notion of citizenship, or effective membership in a community in one territorial area, first provided citizens with equal access to the political system and the legal system. The last phase — social citizenship — is understood as the right of citizens to their fair share of the

country's economic and social resources. In many contemporary societies, the social aspects of citizenship are becoming more important. By claiming social entitlements, people can gain confidence in the exercise of their citizenship, which may carry over to the exercise of political rights. However, it is also true that citizenship laws can be constructed to exclude rather than include legal residents fully in a society. Therefore, it is suggested that legal residency should provide the basis for entitlements to work and to services if they are to be provided in an inclusive way.

74. Involvement in economic activity, such as paid work, farming or trade, with the resulting ability to earn or gain access to sufficient resources for livelihood, is the most important component of social integration and social cohesion. In its absence there is either societal conflict or societal flight. Governments have, therefore, a continuing and primary responsibility to secure effective, legal economic participation in society for all who are able to participate. For those unable to participate, governments have a responsibility to secure a means of subsistence for all legal residents.

75. Certain forms of socially useful activity, such as child-rearing or caring for those with disabilities, are often not undertaken as paid employment. They are nevertheless important forms of participation in society and must be regarded as equally valuable. Therefore, while paid work may be the single most important means of social integration, unpaid but socially useful activities must be afforded equal status. One way to do this is to provide entitlement to social services and income maintenance on the basis of residency, not paid work. It is also possible to increase participation by bringing together groups with complementary needs; for example, it might be possible to meet the needs of young parents for reliable child-care facilities by entrusting older persons (who are not necessarily related, but community-based) to provide those services, thereby enabling their continued participation in and contribution to society.

76. In some developed economies, conventional means for expanding opportunities for paid employment may have been exhausted. Two kinds of policy responses need to be considered in order to continue to provide for the inclusion of all rather than the exclusion by unemployment of some. One response, at the top end of the labour market, might be negotiated job-sharing. The other, at the bottom end, might be the payment of a citizenship or residency income on condition of societal participation, which can then be supplemented, without conditions, with income from flexible and casual employment.

77. Citizenship participation in economic activities should extend beyond paid employment to participation in the decision-making processes at the plant, industry, country, and supra-national levels. The tripartite forms of governance of employment policy established in many countries should be extended and developed in ways that take account of the transnational nature of much economic activity. For example, the requirement placed upon transnational companies operating in Europe to consult with their work force before deciding to move employment from one country to another could be adopted in other regions.

78. The link between economic activity, employment and the provision of social services — such as social security or social protection systems and health care — should be reconsidered in the light of recent economic developments. In a world of increasingly flexible and insecure employment and in a world that should value other forms of societal participation equally, the basis for access to social services should also be reconsidered. Traditional, employment-based social security systems are under challenge. The suggested path of privatized and individualized pension funds should be complemented by a greater role for universal entitlement based on residency. In addition, when efforts are made to eradicate social evils of assorted types, attention needs to be paid to the rehabilitation of those who lose their livelihoods thereby.

79. Another aspect of the link is taxes on employment as a source of revenue for governments. In the context of economic globalization and competition, it may be necessary to reduce taxes on workers and to replace the revenue thus collected for the financing of social services by other forms of taxation.

80. It is worth restating that the provision of social security, health care and education for all, regardless of ability to pay, by welfare States in Europe was essential to securing social cohesion, social solidarity, and safe societies. It is a model — in contrast to the fashionable view that such welfare is not affordable, even in a paired-down form — which could be emulated in other parts of the globe. This is not to say that the form of provision and the agency of provision need to be the same. Welfare is and should be provided by a mix of state, non-governmental organization, private and informal entities, ideally underpinned by the assumption that to include the better-off in entitlement to state services is to secure the defence of those services by the most powerful. Targeted and residual services are recipes for social exclusion.

81. To include people and facilitate their participation in social services, it is necessary to make information about

them available to users in various ways. Non-governmental organizations, such as neighbourhood advice centres, play an important role in making services accessible. They can also act to transmit the views of clients to service providers.

82. If social services are to encourage the effective participation of all residents, they must be made equally accessible to and useful to members of all racial, ethnic and religious groups in a society. The challenge is to provide equitably for diverse social needs in ways that are culturally sensitive. This can be facilitated in three ways: by ensuring that the providers of services reflect the diversity of society; by monitoring with appropriate statistics and surveys the differential use of services by each group; and by ensuring that the form in which the service is provided matches the wishes of ethnic or other minorities. For education this may mean achieving a balance between universal standards and partially separate provision in different languages or in ways that reflect different cultural needs. A desirable goal, however, for fostering social inclusion would be for each arm of the educational system to be informed about the other culture. Linking parents and teachers from different ethnic groups could promote integrated multi-ethnic communities.

83. National governments are the main but not the only governmental agents to ensure social cohesion and participation. Also important is the role of supra-national organizations which may intervene in a country when national governments act in ways which appear to exclude people from their entitlements. The Council of Europe's Court of Human Rights is just one example of an institution that empowers citizens to take their country to court for denial of their rights. That mechanism, or something similar, could be introduced in other regions or on a global scale and extended to include social as well as citizenship rights.

V. Information, education and the media

84. Information must be considered not as a commodity but as a civic right, and the capacities to produce and to understand information should be seen as important resources for participation.

85. It is the responsibility of government to develop two-way communication with citizens. Governments and administrative institutions have to provide citizens and clients with comprehensive and understandable information about policies, laws, rules and procedures, available services and rights of the population to have access to services of a certain quality. Such information has to be based on the knowledge, experience and needs of people. Indicators used for assessing the provision of social services should be based on understandable and valid quantitative and qualitative criteria. Associations of clients and other non-governmental organizations have to be involved in elaborating such criteria, and for monitoring the delivery and quality of social services.

86. It is not enough to provide people with information "from above". Disadvantaged groups of the population should be given "voice"; they need access to communication channels in order to formulate their own needs, social experiences and judgements about public matters. Those groups should be an important source of information for policy makers. It is important for the sources of information within communities to be heard, and it is also important to recognize the need to move from expert-based sources to community-based, grass-roots sources, as the basis for policy-making. This requires involving people in the community in the production of information that is important to them and then communicating that information to others.

87. Non-governmental organizations and community-based organizations representing the poor, minorities and various vulnerable groups should empower their members through training to take an active role in formulating policy priorities. Establishing channels for two-way communication between the political and administrative elite, on the one hand, and poor and powerless groups, on the other hand, should be considered an important mechanism for enhancing participation and social integration. Non-governmental organizations need special training in communication skills and in policy formulation to perform effectively and avoid being manipulated.

88. Governments, non-governmental organizations and community-based organizations should cooperate in the elaboration of "client's charters". The charters should contain information about the rights of clients, the duties and responsibilities of providers of social services, and the availability of social services to different groups of the population. Administration could be made more transparent by improved public access to official data and documents, including channels provided by non-governmental organizations and community-based organizations and via the Internet.

89. Education is the most powerful way to break the vicious circle of poverty, powerlessness and exclusion. While basic, primary education is essential, it is not enough. In order to promote participation and integration, all children should have access to quality education at all levels. The quality of teaching and modern technological infrastructure

of education, including computers and access to the Internet, have to be developed in schools, particularly in the poorest countries and neighbourhoods, with the help of governmental programmes, voluntary fund-raising and international assistance.

90. Tools of communication should include direct or indirect representation in organizations, special written appeals, petitions, delegations, pamphleteering; where the majority of the population is illiterate, it is important to make extensive use of radio and television. Other useful tools include educational drama, videos, audio cassettes and pictorial illustrations, which give an opportunity to the illiterate to contribute to the planning of activities.

91. An educated citizenry is a precondition for fully effective democratic institutions. To facilitate participation and empower the weakest, civic education has a special role. Programmes for civic education should be developed in all schools and adult education courses. They should include knowledge and training of skills needed for the protection of human and social rights of the poor and marginalized people, basics of legislation and the judicial system in the country, knowledge of political systems, procedures and rules of democratic decision-making and policy-building. In secondary schools and courses for adults, project-based social learning could be used for developing participatory capacities.

92. In the increasingly complicated world of a globalized economy, basic knowledge of economics and the fundamentals of public and private financing and the principles of international economic systems should be made understandable for children and young people. This knowledge is needed to enhance entrepreneurship and self-reliance among people living in poverty and socially disadvantaged people, and it is also useful for enhancing capacity and self-protection.

93. With increasing globalization and the growing multi-ethnicity of many societies, the content of general education, starting from pre-school education, should contribute to openness and tolerance and to fostering the intercultural communication skills of young people belonging to both majorities and minorities. To maintain social cohesion across ethnic and class boundaries, education should promote solidarity and empathy among young people.

94. Social learning and professional retraining are needed by both young people and adults if they are to adjust to the social and economic changes going on in all countries. Life-long learning is not only a way to fight unemployment and exclusion; it is also essential for the social integration of the generations.

95. New media, based on computers and global networks, create immense opportunities for a new dialogue between people and for uses of all kinds of information. But the new media are also creating new exclusions and cleavages between countries and groups that are "info-rich" or "info-poor". Special efforts by governments (national and local) and assistance from international organizations are needed to bridge this new gap and give people living in poverty opportunities for participation in the new information society. Schools, libraries and other public places in poor regions, equipped with computers and Internet access, need to be turned into community communication centres. Internet training programmes should be organized for community activists and young people, in order to promote not only passive use of information networks but also active participation in creating home-pages, generating new data and spreading information to others via web-sites. The Internet creates a new space for public debate where people with similar needs can share experiences and ideas and find support for participation in policy-building and social monitoring. The Internet could and should be used as a new resource for the interregional and international integration of socially disadvantaged people.

96. Mass media are still the most powerful channels of information. They could be used responsibly for democratic purposes, but more often they help to promote the interests of commercial or political elites. Some types of information can also be disempowering. Satellite television and the Internet are often used to advocate mass consumerism, and their content can be erosive and insensitive to local cultures and traditions. For young people, in particular, there is danger of becoming "hooked" on consumerism and superficial consumer culture. For women, the Internet and satellite television can also be disempowering to the extent that they are used to transmit negative images or perceptions. Some discretion needs to be considered or ability developed which would enable users to select and screen different kinds of information.

97. Ultimately, responsibility in the media is best maintained by the demands of its audience. In order to create demand for information of higher quality and develop the capacity for critical use of the mass media, media education should be included in school programmes and courses of adult education.

98. Information also includes various forms of public and private data and statistics. Statistics are usually collected on the basis of household surveys, with the result that individuals within households or individuals with no discernable home can be overlooked. Data collection may be manipulated and statistical information may be used to

support just about any position. It is important for national statistical offices to maintain a high degree of autonomy to protect the objectivity of their work.

VI. Justice systems

99. Participation requires a guarantee of the rule of law and fair judicial procedures, in order to reduce the likelihood of interpretations that are arbitrary, corrupt or biased. This further requires creation of a solid legal environment, including an independent judiciary with sufficient resources, including enough judges who are sufficiently remunerated. There is a tremendous backlog of legal cases in many places which increases the burden on people seeking redress of grievances and causes them to lose faith in legal systems. Judicial decisions also need better enforcement. It is often very hard to have the outcome of legal processes implemented.

100. People are generally quite concerned with the processes through which legal decisions are reached. In addition to evaluating the fairness of outcomes, people evaluate the fairness of the procedures by which those outcomes are determined. One important implication is that people are willing to accept and view as fair those outcomes that they regard as unfavourable if the process through which those outcomes were derived is fair.

101. This "procedural justice effect" is important because it suggests a way to avoid the potential harm that the resolution of disputes can do to social relationships within a group or society. Poorly resolved disputes can threaten enduring relationships and discourage future participation. Using procedures regarded by all parties as fair facilitates the maintenance of positive relations among group members and preserves the fabric of society, even in the face of the conflict of interest that exists in any group whose members want different things.

102. It is possible to distinguish at least six criteria for evaluating the justice of procedures: consistency; bias suppression; accuracy; correctability, or appeals mechanisms; representativeness; and ethical values.

103. Another goal should be the creation of honest law enforcement agencies that effectively carry out court decisions and a court administration that ensures that cases are dealt with expeditiously and at reasonable cost to the plaintiff. Where necessary, the provision of legal aid mechanisms or the encouragement of *pro bono* work by lawyers would help to provide people living in poverty with access to justice and legal systems. Non-governmental organizations and community-based organizations could also intervene on behalf of disadvantaged and marginalized people, by such means as public interest or class action litigation.

104. Attempts should be made to ensure that, wherever possible, laws are rendered in language that is clear and understandable to everyone. This might be encouraged by means of technical assistance to countries wishing to simplify their legal language.

105. The existence of ombudsmen has proved to be effective in several countries. An ombudsman is generally an independent person who acts as intermediary between people and administrations, promoting people's awareness of their human and social rights and helping them overcome the complexities of judicial systems and bureaucratic procedures. He receives complaints, and when he thinks they are justified, he can make recommendations or injunctions to the administration to correct the situation. In order for an ombudsman to fulfil his function, he must be provided with sufficient means, the right to obtain information upon request from administrations, and the authority to enjoin the administration if such requested information is not forthcoming. An important tool of the ombudsman is his ability to draw public attention to situations. All countries should consider implementing a system of ombudsmen.

106. It is also important to ensure in all legal dealings that decisions or judgements are obtained in reasonable amounts of time. To this end, every country should publish a public document indicating the average duration of court proceedings from the time of submission of a case to the delivery of a judgement. This would help to inform people about what they can expect and might be complemented by thorough information on judicial procedures.

107. School curricula or other educational opportunities should include courses in civic education. Opportunities for continuing education and training on constitutional rights, legal issues and political processes promote greater awareness of rights and can lead to increased empowerment.

VII. Corruption

108. Corruption is denial of the dignity and rights of other human beings and of basic rights and values. Therefore, combating corruption must reinforce the basic ethical and moral principles upon which society is built.

109. The concept of corruption is culture-bound: different societies have differing perceptions of it. Arriving at a working definition, universally agreed upon, is rather

improbable. Nevertheless, a common understanding exists regarding what is meant, best expressed by the lexical definition: "acting dishonestly or illegally in return for money or personal gain".

110. Corruption is a fact of life in many societies, although its modalities, prevalence, and incidence obviously vary. The degree of tolerance for, and indeed acceptance of, corrupt practices appears to be greater in some societies than in others. Where corruption is culturally accepted and ingrained, it would not be surprising to find that efforts to eliminate it meet with indifference, if not resistance.

111. Nevertheless, regardless of cultural context, corruption undermines the creation of transparent and accountable public institutions, hinders the just and equitable delivery of public services, obstructs economic efficiency and acts as a barrier to participation and social integration. Corruption obstructs constitutional and legal participation, for it distorts the rule of law and creates biases in the legal system. Corruption severely reduces, and often acts to negate, the impact of positive measures for enhancing participation and social justice.

112. It is perhaps useful to identify varieties of corruption, each having different exclusionary effects on subgroups in the population. The typology proposed here is based on who the participants are, but it is by no means a comprehensive classification.

113. Street-level corruption involves ordinary citizens engaging in transactions with petty officials or street-level bureaucrats. Money is exchanged in return for services, either to speed up the delivery of those services to which the citizen is legally entitled or to persuade officials to overlook transgressions of the law or, worse, turn a blind eye to nefarious activities. Street-level corruption obstructs economic efficiency and acts as a barrier to participation, insofar as it prevents access to services. People living in poverty, in particular, are likely to be excluded. Moreover, by failing to put a stop to illegal activities, street-level corruption enhances the perpetuation of social ills that promote social disintegration.

114. A second variety of corruption involves "kickbacks", or transfers between private sector businesses and bureaucrats or politicians. Such transactions can vary in scale, and they can occur at all levels of the bureaucratic or political system. Kickback corruption correlates with inefficient use of public funds — i.e., the public is short-changed. Ultimately, kickback corruption is detrimental to the principles of distributive justice. It also is contrary to the notion of administrative and political accountability.

115. A third variety of corruption concerns the sale of public offices. Here, the arena is the bureaucracy and its political masters. Although such corruption may not have an immediate impact on participation and social integration, its effects can be severely damaging in the longer term. The sale of public office renders merit systems impossible and leads to administrative incompetence and the impairment of administrative efficiency.

116. Counteractive measures should be tailored to the specific type of corruption they are intended to combat. In the case of street-level corruption, the following measures are suggested:

(a) Review and increase, as appropriate, the salaries of petty officials in order to reduce their temptation to accept bribes. The additional costs may be covered by savings achieved by downsizing the bureaucracy. The budgets of public service agencies can in some cases also be increased by charging user fees, which can then be applied towards personnel expenditures;

(b) Stipulate in official regulations the length of time required for the provision of any public service (e.g., permit applications, health-care delivery), and make the information available to citizens. This ensures that people know what they have a right to expect and commits the bureaucracy to operate within a specified time-frame;

(c) Provide complaint mechanisms, such as ombudsmen, so that citizens may voice their grievances. This enables middle-level bureaucrats to review the performance of their subordinates;

(d) Publicize citizens' complaints in the local media (television spots, for example). Publicity may have a deterrent effect;

(e) Ensure that corruption, when exposed, is appropriately punished.

117. Measures to counteract kickback corruption include the following:

(a) Create effective evaluation and performance auditing systems. The results must be made available to the public. This should serve as a mechanism for bringing discrepancies between inputs (public resources) and outputs to light;

(b) Make bidding and tendering processes more transparent and subject to public scrutiny.

118. To counter corruption involving the sale of public offices, political reform is quite likely a necessary prior condition.

VIII. International initiatives

119. Throughout this report, attention has been drawn to the international dimension of the issues discussed and, where relevant, the policy implications. Below are some suggestions for responding to a number of specific concerns which are best handled through international cooperation.

120. International action is an important and necessary supplement to national action to eliminate the social evils that are spread by international flows of people, goods and capital. Such flows make it almost impossible for any country acting alone to control even those problems that might initially appear to be wholly endogenous in origin. In other spheres — such as the electronic transmission of information and television programmes — there may be no readily identifiable social evil resulting from international flows, but a need exists to ensure that channels are not monopolized by one or a few individuals or corporations. In yet other spheres, the problem might indeed be of wholly endogenous origin but might not be susceptible to control at the national level.

121. International travel and tourism may bring numerous benefits but also impose readily identifiable human costs, sex tourism being among the worst examples. This kind of social evil requires resources for the rehabilitation of the people affected. However, for a country of destination to impose a tax on incoming tourists will merely divert tourists to other destinations. Therefore, tax on tourists can only be imposed multilaterally. An international fund accruing from the imposition of a tax on tourism could be allocated to countries of destination, ideally in proportion to their share of tourists or in accordance with some other acceptable formula.

122. The international trade in illicit drugs is a social evil that can be most effectively controlled within the framework of a multilateral agreement. Consumption of such drugs cannot be controlled in any country unilaterally, without the active cooperation of countries where the major sources of production are located.

123. The production of small arms in the world relies on ethnic strife. It is vital for the world supply of small arms of the kind used in insurgency and counter-insurgency operations (which are quite distinct from conventional military weapons) to be scaled down within the framework of a global treaty. This may not suffice for the eradication of ethnic strife, but commercial interest in promoting and sharpening it must be eliminated.

124. Corruption was considered in detail above. Here attention is drawn to a class of corrupt practices which is a concomitant of (legal) international flows of goods or capital, in the form of kickbacks and commissions on large purchases to influential decision makers in the purchasing countries, and which can exist only in a world where there are havens for the financial assets acquired thereby. It is impossible for a country acting unilaterally to stamp out these types of corrupt practices without information from global financial centres on ownership of financial assets. Information of this type is at present supplied only within the framework of bilateral treaties. Effective resolution of the problem requires a multilateral treaty, involving all banking centres. Moves should be made towards a multilateral banking information treaty. Rankings of countries by degree of corruption are not particularly informative and suggest that the problem is wholly endogenous in origin. They also direct attention away from the global enabling environment for corruption, which is the level at which corrective action is most urgently required.

125. It is important to promote diversity in sources and channels of information. Electronic transmission of information and television entertainment are increasingly globalized, and the preservation of competition and access for all potential suppliers is essential. It is difficult for any single Government to promote diversity, and consideration might be given to some form of international cooperation in this regard. There is the more nebulous, but no less serious, question of the impact of international flows on local and national cultures. It is not clear that any sort of global solution can be devised, but there is certainly a need to voice concern about the situation.

126. With the phenomenal growth in the number of non-governmental organizations — in developing countries, in particular — and with their funding most often from external sources, there is need for the development of agreed standards and greater transparency to minimize the potential that such organizations can serve as conduits for funds of suspect origin. In principle, it would be easy to devise a framework for the registration and regulation of such flows, but that is not what is called for. Agreed standards of behaviour and greater transparency in operations are preferred by far. It is imperative to ensure that the framework would not create burdensome bureaucratic requirements or be used to harass particular non-governmental organizations out of favour with the Government of the host country.

127. If the participation of citizens in the decision-making process is best ensured by political democracy, it is essential that elections be free and fair. This is not a simple matter in

many developing countries, where violence and terror in the more remote areas, in particular, often accompany the voting process. The United Nations is particularly well situated to provide assistance for the conduct of free and fair elections. There is already a provision for such assistance by the United Nations and other agents, governmental and quasi-governmental — some of which have entered into specific agreements of cooperation with the United Nations. What is now required is further reinforcement of those programmes and wider dissemination of information about their existence.

128. While it is important to discuss and strengthen mechanisms for enhanced participation at the national level, it is also imperative to strive to strengthen the international framework in support of good governance and participation, in part through improving the functioning of the United Nations system. It is absolutely appropriate that participatory systems of democracy, which are deemed essential at the national level, should also exist internationally. In essence, the international level is key to setting standards, priorities and ways and means of interaction, which can influence the way countries run their economic and social policies. All countries and multinational corporations have a responsibility to set standards of accountability and abide by principles that uphold justice and equality, thereby contributing to greater participation and improved governance, both nationally and internationally.

129. The fundamental concern of social development must be to empower people to have greater control over decisions affecting their lives. The goal of social integration, expressed at the United Nations Conference on Social Development, is to create a society for all based on tolerance and respect for diversity. The way to reach it is to create inner capacities and tap innate resources through greater participation and a concern for learning and growth in all social, economic and political interactions. Models of development based on privilege and power create societies characterized by vast and undemocratic disparities which are unsustainable both physically and ethically. They must evolve, to become more inclusive and cooperative. This will take time. Political change may occur very rapidly; economic reform can take effect relatively quickly; but social change is a long-term process. If the next century is to offer more opportunity than the current century to the people of the world to live lives of dignity, the process must be started.

Appendix

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